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1961/10/27

196. Telegram From the President's Military Representative (Taylor) to the Embassy in Vietnam [1]

Bangkok, October 27, 1961—8 p.m.

146. Eyes only for Amb Nolting. The fol outlines actions agreed upon during Gen Taylor's visit in Saigon. Memo for record [2] is being pouched this date.

In order to reduce reaction time fol approval of some or all of the recommendations growing out of the visit of the Taylor Mission, Emb Saigon and the Taylor Mission will undertake the fol actions without delay:

A. Improvement of intelligence on the V.C.

(1) The anticipated form of the mission recommendation will be to urge a joint GVN–US effort to improve the organization, techniques and end product of the intelligence bearing on the V.C. insurgency. . . .

(2) The Emb Saigon will develop a specific proposal along these lines for discussion with the GVN, repeating to Washington such reinforcements in personnel and equipment as may be necessary to support the plan.

B. A joint survey of the security situation at the provincial level.

(1) The Mission will recommend that such a survey be encouraged for the purpose of improving US knowledge of what takes place at the grass roots of the insurgency and for acquiring a greater ability to influence the GVN to take appropriate measures.

(2) The Emb Saigon will propose to the GVN the composition of the survey parties and a procedure for their operation.

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 120.1551K/10–2761. Secret; Eyes Only. Repeated to the Department for U. Alexis Johnson as telegram 625, which is the source text. Telegrams to and from General Taylor in Bangkok were numbered in sequence with other telegrams to and from Bangkok. The incoming telegrams bear Ambassador Young's signature.

[2] Dated October 25, signed by Taylor, and transmitted as an attachment to Bagley's memorandum of October 27 to Nolting. (Washington National Records Center, RG 84, Saigon Embassy Files: FRC 66 A 878, Vietnam—Taylor)

C. Improvement of army mobility.

(1) The Mission will recommend, upon return to Washington, the prompt provision of US mil helicopters up to about 3 companies.

(2) The Emb–MAAG will report to Washington the command and control procedures recommended for the operation of these helicopters and the plan for their location and administration. At the same time the MAAG will recommend the amount and kind of light aviation necessary to improve the over all mobility of the army and, in particular, to support the proposed border ranger force.

D. Blocking infiltration in the high plateau.

(1) The mission will recommend US Govt support for the creation of the "carefully tailored border ranger force" in terms of US advisors, authorized VN personnel ceiling and special equipment.

(2) The Emb–MAAG will press upon the GVN the prompt organization of such a force, utilizing existing ranger units and will report to Washington the requirements in US personnel and equipment.

E. Introduction of US military forces.

(1) The mission will recommend the prompt introduction of a flood relief task force of a composition to be recommended by the Emb, Saigon. It is felt that such a force could arrive piece-meal if the arrival as a package will substantially delay the initial contingent.

(2) The Emb–MAAG will recommend promptly to Washington the composition of mission, and schedule of arrival of such a force and tentative thinking on where it will be located and how administered.

F. Actions to emphasize the national emergency and a new phase in the war.

(1) The mission will discuss in Washington the actions which can be taken there to focus attention upon the new phase which we are entering in conjunction with the GVN. Among the actions considered would be a letter from President Kennedy indicating to President Diem the new forms of support which the US Govt offers.

(2) The Emb, Saigon will urge upon Pres Diem the need to announce governmental changes calculated to raise confidence in Saigon and Washington in the probability of success of the new program. It will give specific consideration to the desirability of a letter from President Diem appealing for US aid to cope with the double disaster of the Viet Cong aggression and the flood in the southwestern provinces.

The Emb, Saigon will keep Gen Taylor informed during his return trip to Washington of new developments arising from the foregoing follow-up actions.